

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES  
FACE-TO-FACE MEETING AGREEMENT**

**Pawtucket Middle and High Schools - April 8, 2002  
Pawtucket Elementary Schools – May 2, 2002**

**Attending from Pawtucket School District**

**April 8, 2002:** Merry Caswell, Principal, Slater Junior High; Charleen Christy, Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance; Joseph Cunha, Assistant Superintendent; Hans Delith, Superintendent; Beth DiPanni, Core Team; William Jeonotte, SIT Chairperson, Jenks Junior High; Sheryl Kabbitt, Tolman High School; Mary Ann Kaveny, Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance; Robert King, SIT Chairperson, Slater Junior High; Kim Mercer, Director of Curriculum; John Richer, Shea High School; Roger Roussette, Tolman High School; Barbara Savella, Shea High School; Raymond Spooner, School Committee; Clifford Wallace, Goff Junior High; Debra Westgate-Silva, Goff Junior High;

**May 2, 2002:** Ronald Beaupre, Teacher, Baldwin School; Rose Mary Choiniere, Principal, Curvin McCabe School; Charlene Christy, Pawtucket Teacher's Alliance; Joseph Cunha, Assistant Superintendent; Ray Dalton, Principal, Baldwin School; Hans Dellith, Superintendent; Michelle Depot, teacher, Winters School; Larry DeYoung, Principal, Winters School; James DiOrio, Principal, Fallon School; Dee Emond, teacher, Fallon School; Eleanora Ercolano, SIT Chair, Potter-Burns School; Rosina Guise, SIT Coordinator, Nathanael Greene School; Gloria Haddad, teacher, Little School; John Haidemenos, Principal, Little School; Keith Hemenway, Principal, Nathanael Greene School; Mary Ann Kaveny, President, Pawtucket Teacher's Alliance; Ronald La Fontaine, Principal, Webster School; John McCabe, Principal, Curtis School; Kim Mercer, Director of Curriculum; Kathy Morrisette, SIT Chair, Curtis School; Connie O-Riley, Principal, Potter-Burns School; Sara Porter, teacher, Webster School; Kristen Slovak, teacher, Curvin McCabe School; Linda Washington, Principal, Cunningham School;

**Attending RIDE Staff**

**April 8, 2002:** Colleen Callahan, Board of Regents; Mary Cerullo, Reading Fellow; William Fiske, Office of Instruction; Todd Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner; Betsy Hyman, Office of Assessment; Linda Jzyk, High School Reform; James Karon, Office of Assessment; Judy Keeley, Office of Instruction; Rick Richards, Policy Support; Mat Santos, Office of Equity and Access; Diane Schaefer, Office of Instruction; Jennifer Wood, Chief Legal Counsel/Chief of Staff; Jackie Ascrizzi, Office of Integrated Social Services.

**May 2, 2002:** Jackie Ascrizzi, Office of Integrated Social Services; Janet Carroll, Title I Office; Todd Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner; Elizabeth Hyman, Office of

Assessment; James Karon, Office of Assessment; Jennifer Wood, Chief Legal Counsel/Chief of Staff; Ina Woolman, Office of Special Needs;

### **RIDE Welcome and Meeting Orientation**

Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty welcomed the group and provided an overview of the purpose and objectives of the meeting including:

- Establishing an agreement on next steps as outlined in the School Performance Category Technical Assistance Bulletin with regard to required District/School/RIDE actions;
- Addressing district capacity for implementing activities/next steps (to be outlined in the May 1<sup>st</sup> CRP, Article 31 – Strategic Planning document for submittal to RIDE which also needs to be approved publicly in a Pawtucket School Committee meeting);
- Addressing RIDE capacity to support, if applicable; and
- Generating a meeting report which needs to be made “public” at the district’s School Committee meeting.

### **District/School Response**

Representatives from the district were given the opportunity to respond to the school performance category designation as it applies to the district as a whole and to each individual school. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Hans Dellith and his staff started their presentation by distributing their *"NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND - BEST PRACTICES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN."* Included in this action plan are several targeted strategies for improving student achievement in Pawtucket. It was also noted that several of the elementary school were categorized as "improving" in one or both areas (English language arts and mathematics). The action plan, however, which addressed several key issues across the grade levels.

Pawtucket's "Balanced Literacy Initiative" uses three tiers of infrastructure to implement a coherent district wide strategy. The K-2 and grade 3-5 use the literacy coach model designed and resourced at the district level. The middle school literacy program is supported by literacy and standards coaches and the High Schools are support by the America's Choice Design. These district level strategies are coordinated by a "Core Team" composed of the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum; Director of Instruction and Assessment, the Early Childhood Coordinator, and the K-12 Literacy Coordinator.

The Balanced Literacy design proposal includes connecting activities at the school level with the district infrastructure through the establishment of school-based literacy teams. These teams also include reading teachers, literacy teachers, and at the high school level department heads in addition to the literacy coaches. Classroom teachers "round-out" the teams.

Professional development for the staff and the teams is coordinated through a series of coordinated series of "models and resources" which represent a comprehensive set of implementation instructional strategies. These strategies are resourced through both local and federal funding streams. They also represent an integrated plan for addressing the diverse student learning needs in Pawtucket. Each school interfaces with this balanced literacy approach via its school improvement plan.

Dr. Flaherty asked several questions relative to the K-12 articulation of the balanced literacy approach and the implementation strategies particularly in the cases of closing equity gaps and addressing the learning needs of the culturally diverse school population in Pawtucket.

The Pawtucket schools "Numeracy Initiative" is mapped out in a similar manner as their "Balanced Literacy" strategy. This initiative geared toward improving mathematics problem solving, concepts and basic skills in a K-12, district-wide design. The grade span strategies however are different from the literacy initiative and mirror more closely the NCTM standards approach (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) in terms of grade span.

As is the case with literacy, the math initiatives rely heavily on use of standards-based materials, literacy coaches, and extensive professional development for school-based teams including the classroom teachers. Likewise, the science initiative is mapped out with the interdependent elements of "science reform leaders," and classroom teachers who use a multitude of standards-based materials including the Rhode Island Science Framework and Project 2061.

Dr. Flaherty emphasized to the Pawtucket administrators and teachers present that the key element to being able to implement a standards-based system is the effective evolution of an appropriately focused professional development system for classroom teachers. These systematic measures can take shape through best practices networks and embedded/continuous professional development aimed at changing teacher practice through on-going support.

Pawtucket staff responded clearly that the goal of their professional development measures were precisely that. A schematic and accompanying district plan entitled "No Child Left Behind" Best Practices for Student Success which was presented in the face-to-face meetings (April 8<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2002) will become the base document from the present forward in response to the school performance category designations. (Face sheet and schematics only attached - 36 page narrative available upon request).

RIDE staff also suggested that technology is a powerful learning tool. To that end, it was recommended that selection decisions regarding software and training are the result of significant input from teachers and instructional leaders. Optimization of the use of technology could prove to be a very effective tool for improved student performance.

Another area for emphasis outlined in Pawtucket's response plan is the "Pawtucket Home, School, Community Initiative." The fundamental elements of this plan as offered by Pawtucket staff are district level operational agreements among the Early Childhood Coordinator, COZ Coordinator, and Health and Wellness Coordinator. These individuals in turn work with "Parent Outreach Coordinators" at the home, school, and community level to construct an interlocking system of support to children and their families. These programs are:

- Kindergarten Parent/Student Orientation
- School Dental Program
- Hippy Program
- Alph Program
- PAT Program
- A+ Adventure Program
- COZ - School-Based Health Centers
- Childcare Centers
- Universal Home Visit Program
- Adult Ed - ESL (Intergenerational)
- After-School Childcare
- Even Start
- Reading Ramp-Up
- Adult Ed - GED

Taken in total these programs target a variety of family activities to assist them in ultimately impacting student performance throughout the district.

As schools responded individually, each one submitted a school improvement plan targeting specific activities. Presentations were given by both Principals and School Improvement Team Chairs.

### **Programmatic/Instructional Actions**

The following provides information about some of the programs and activities of each of the Pawtucket schools ranked as low performing:

#### ***Agnes Little Elementary School***

- Improved efforts to involve parents in their child's education, including the use of workshops on subjects such as math skills, student organizational skills, among others;
- 100% of the faculty is trained in Course I (Standards);
- Increased efforts to improve reading, including after school reading program, Crudase reading program and plans for a summer reading program.

#### ***Curvin-MacCabe Elementary School***

- Participation in math (Working Wonders) and Reading Excellence Networks;

- Strong commitment to Reading Excellence including the purchase of materials, professional development and the use of an on-site consultant;
- Increased focus on multi-step problem solving in math, including use of a consultant.

#### ***Elizabeth Baldwin Elementary School***

- Very active School Improvement Team, using SALT report and surveys and other data to revise plans;
- Partnership with Leslie College focused on professional development for teachers around literacy;
- Other literacy initiatives include Connie Prevatte model of balanced literacy and efforts around expository literacy.

#### ***Fallon Memorial School***

- Increased focus on math problem-solving, including the use of coaches, practicing balanced assessment tasks, and used of common planning time focused on math;
- Only a few teachers are trained in balanced literacy at this point, although more will be trained;
- Self-study proved very useful in revising their plan to improve student performance.

#### ***Flora Curtis Memorial School***

- Use of consultants in math and writing;
- Professional development in literacy and in more diverse instructional strategies to meet the needs of special needs students;
- Focus on science and math, including academic family nights, training K-6 in science curriculum;
- After school and summer reading programs in place.

#### ***Goff Junior High School***

- Implemented Balanced Literacy Program that will expand next year to double blocks for ELA;
- Piloted Connected Math Program; faculty participating in professional development and Task Development workshops to expand the program;
- Selected as one of the United Way's Community Schools, including academic focused after school programs with comprehensive services and family involvement.

#### ***Winters Elementary School***

- Reading Excellence program, including onsite literacy coach;
- Self-evaluation of teaching strategies helped focus needs for professional development;
- School Improvement Team uses consensus model, information sharing and focuses on whole school issues.

#### ***Jenks Junior High School***

- Improved student participation in assessments;

- 78% of teachers have completed Course One (standards) and Eighteen faculty members have completed training in Balanced Literacy;
- After school and summer reading programs and homework help.

#### ***Cunningham Elementary School***

- Academically-focused after school programs;
- Reading Excellence program and math coordinator have supported teaching and learning;
- Grade level meetings include examination of student work and sharing of best practices;
- Use a teachers teaching teachers model of professional development.
- Advanced writing program in all-day Kindergarten, including a coach.

#### ***Nathanael Greene Elementary School***

- K-2 Readers-Writers Workshop model;
- Reading Recovery for lowest achieving readers;
- Focus on reading in content areas;
- After school and summer reading programs.

#### ***Potter-Burns Elementary School***

- 95% trained in Course I (standards);
- All staff trained in differentiated instruction practices;
- Increased focus on family involvement including monthly newsletters, monthly progress reports.

#### ***Slater Junior High School***

- All faculty get four meetings per year on literacy; focusing on expository writing, using practice assessment tests, and writing persuasive essays;
- Strong effort to address barriers to learning through COZ, school-based health center, peer mediation program, among other efforts;
- 100% completed Course I (standards); all math faculty trained in Connected Math program; all ELA faculty trained in Connie Prevatte Balanced Literacy.

#### ***Shea Senior High School***

- Implementation of America's Choice for School Design Team and Program;
- Professional development offered for teaming, math and literacy;
- 87 minutes per day for math and English.

#### ***Webster Street Elementary School***

- This is a newly reconfigured school with only one year of testing results;
- After school and summer reading programs;
- Student services include counseling, conflict resolution, and behavior management help for teachers.

#### ***Tolman Senior High School***

- Implementation of America's Choice for School Design Team and Program;

- Participate in the Skills Commission High School Network;
- Double periods of math and ELA daily;
- Implementing teaming.

### **RIDE/Pawtucket Agreements**

- Pawtucket (district) and RIDE will continue their meetings between the Deputy Commissioner of Education (Todd Flaherty) and other RIDE staff and the Superintendent of Schools (Hans Dellith) and his staff with members of the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance in a Progressive Support and Intervention format (PS&I).
- Pawtucket (district) will implement the strategies outlined in their planning document entitled "*NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND*" - *BEST PRACTICES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS*" presented to Commissioner McWalters on April 8 and May 2, 2002 by the Pawtucket Schools' staff. (See attached schematic - Entire document available upon request).
- Pawtucket (schools) will implement their revised strategies outlined in their individual school improvement plans in response to the "Low Performing" designations which were submitted to the Deputy Commissioner in the face-to-face meetings on April 8 and May 2, 2002 by principals and their School Improvement Team leaders.
- Pawtucket (district) will thoroughly review its planned professional development strategies for evaluation of efficacy, appropriateness and focus, including programs which address literacy and numeracy. This focus also may be broadened to include National Board Certification and district acknowledged school-based programs such as "balanced" literacy programs as well as other multi-school initiatives like "Reading Excellence."
- Pawtucket (district) will continue to explore methods to implementing full-day kindergarten for all entering kindergartners.
- Pawtucket (district) will continue to implement structural instructional improvements such as looking at maintaining low class size (class-size reduction) and increased planning time for teachers particularly at the elementary level.
- Pawtucket (district) needs to complete its standards-based curriculum in both English language arts and mathematics by August 2002 including careful integration of transitional grade-level sequences. (i.e. 5-6, 8-9, etc.)
- Pawtucket (middle schools) will immediately take steps to improve the transition for academic success *from* the elementary feeder schools *to* the

Middle Schools and subsequently to the High Schools. These steps should take the form of concrete action steps and be reviewed and approved by the central office.

- Pawtucket (middle schools) need to review their instructional support program in literacy and numeracy (English language arts and mathematics) to address the diverse student learning needs and focus intensive professional development on those areas.
- Pawtucket (middle schools and high schools) school improvement teams need to take immediate steps to allocate time to the review of all available data to pinpoint detailed strategies to close equity gaps in student achievement.
- Pawtucket (high schools) will clarify the graduation expectations for all students through the development of a "common core" of expectations.
- Pawtucket (high schools) will immediately implement action steps outlined in their school improvement and district plans to dramatically reduce the dropout rates.
- Pawtucket (high school) teachers will continue to be trained in standards-based instruction for all English language arts and mathematics courses. (All subject area teachers need to share in a working knowledge of content area subjects).
- Pawtucket (district) will aggressively pursue the implementation of its strategies to support families/parents in terms of support systems to improve student achievement.

#### **Potential RIDE Support for Pawtucket**

- RIDE will continue its support for Pawtucket by including them in instructional support networks such as Reading Excellence and Elementary Standards and Assessment Network.
- RIDE will work with Pawtucket to improve opportunities for school leadership training in the area of standards-based instruction.
- RIDE will continue to work with Pawtucket on family and community support structures such as COZs.
- RIDE will continue to access support through potential use of Progressive Support and Intervention resources wherever possible.
- RIDE will review Pawtucket's document entitled "*Pawtucket School District: Estimated First-Year Budget - New initiatives to determine appropriate use of any new or existing federal program resources*" to



better understand funding gaps once both the state and federal budget have passed.